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National Representative CWA - District I
COMMUNICATORS WORKERS OF AMERICA (CWA-CIO)
DISTRICT I

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CONDUCTING WORKING MEETINGS

- 1) Choose one person to act as meeting chairperson. It would be best if the Chairperson already has a friendly relationship with the Congressperson.
- 2) Choose one person to initiate and lead the discussion on each issue.
- 3) Decide the order in which the issues will be presented and priority.
- 4) Knows HOW Much time you will be spending with each Congressperson person. try to decide how much time to allocate to each issue.
- 5) Prepare a list with the names, addresses, and local numbers of all those attending the meeting and give this list to the legislator when you enter his/her office.

THE MEETING ITSELF

- 1) Chairperson should open meeting by introducing himself/himself to the Congressperson. Quickly list the issues we are there to discuss, then ask each member in the room to introduce themselves.
- 2) When introducing yourselves, aside from your name, QUICKLY list your local number, the office you hold (if any), the local's jurisdiction (are you represent, the type of work your members perform, and the geographic area covered by is your local), and indicate that you live in the district if that is the case.
- 3) The Chairperson should then call on each issue leader to start the conversation rolling.
- 4) Everybody present should then feel free to "Chime in" whenever there is a point that needs to be made.
- 5) The Chairperson, keeping track of time, should politely end the conversation on any issue if it is going on too long, then call on the next issue leader to insure that all issues are adequately covered.
- 6) The issue leader should present our case for supporting or opposing the issue briefly.
- 7) Appealing to their sense of fairness and "humanity" is always good- especially if you can give specific examples of workers problems, if possible from their own district.
- 8) Stay on fully on the legislator's side, but try not to let them monopolize the time, or "drift-off" into other areas. Keep to the issue you are discussing.

- 11 Respond to the legislator's opinions, but try not to argue.
- 12 After each issue is discussed the issue leader should briefly recap the legislator's overall opinion (if you forget what it is !!)
- 13 Attempt to subtly pin down what the legislator has said:
EXAMPLE: "Correct me if I am wrong Congressman Smith, but it is our understanding that you are opposed to the deregulation of natural gas and will actively and publicly oppose it."
- 14 Make sure to stress before the meeting is over that you are part of a regular working committee active in his/her district and will be keeping in touch with his/her office on a regular basis.
- 15 Fill-out your lobbying report on each Congressman right away. Note briefly:
-his/her position; favorable, unfavorable, undecided
-the arguments he/she used
-any offers to help or support
-any follow-up that should be done
- 16 When back home the Chairperson should send a thank-you note to the Congressman for his/her time despite the outcome of the meeting. The letter should list the names and addresses of all those in attendance at the meeting.
- 17 AND YOU THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE EASY !!

GENERAL LITVING GUIDELINES

- 1) Take notes during the meeting.
- 2) If in the course of the meeting the Congressperson has agreed to support our position, thank him/her. Ask if he/she will help us win over other legislators or make a public statement in support. If there are any other members of your state's Congressional delegation who you know are opposed to the issue- ask the Congressperson to "work on" those members.
- 3) If the Congressperson has been "non-committal", thank her/him for taking the time to discuss the issue and allowing you to express our views. Leave them the issue sheets and any other information you have which might help to sway their opinion. Imply that you would like to contact his/her office at a later date (soon) for a position.
- 4) If the Congressperson does not support our issue, try to leave it on as friendly a note as possible. Today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally. Leave an opening for further contact on the issue. Say you're sorry you can't agree. Mention the issue, if any, you did agree upon.
- 5) Don't feel you have to know all the answers. You are not supposed to be an expert- just a concerned citizen and union member. If you do not know the answer to a question, promise them that you will get the answer or more information as soon as possible. Then be sure to do it.
- 6) Leave the way open for more contact- on these issues or the next ones. It is important that we keep an on-going relationship with these legislators. The impression you leave is extremely important.